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ABSTRACT

Using data collected in 95 Ohio school districts by Brock Hunt, this study reanalyzed those data, examined the reasons for Hunt's inability to predict a school board member incumbent's defeat, and developed a model that would have predicted those Ohio school board elections. Hunt attempted to develop a statistical model of socioeconomic-political indicators that would predict the defeat of an incumbent, but failed, as his model could only account for such defeats after the fact. It is suggested in this paper that the effect of time distorted the prediction model developed by Hunt because the model did not take account of the concept of "shrinkage." In the present study, variables which are stable and consistent across time were obtained and a dissatisfaction factor--based on the Dissatisfaction Theory of American Democracy--that took into account the number of challengers in the election was developed. It was found that, without the dissatisfaction factor, election outcomes could not be predicted, thus supporting the Dissatisfaction Theory. Many tables are supplied, and 13 references are listed. (DCS)

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PREDICTING PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION: A STUDY OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER DEFEAT

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Presented at the American Educational Research Association
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PREDICTING PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION: A STUDY OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER DEFEAT

Predicting national elections on the election night has become not only an exact science but a national parlor game with perhaps serious political implications. Again in 1984 hundreds of thousands of potential voters knew with absolute certainty who would be elected president even before they had voted. Although this "fortelling" had no influence on the 1984 election, some suggest that it may have a serious effect in future elections.

Still there are some compelling reasons for being interested in predicting elections. The election process is the heart of the democratic process. The process of changing public policy and governments with ballots rather than bullets is perhaps the best hope for mankind. The study of elections and of voting behaviors should lead to a better understanding of that process. How voters can change policy output, should be of great concern to the social sciences. Such an electoral process is the essence of American democracy.

Lutz and Iannaccone (1978) noted that the governance of education by local school boards and the political process that generates that type of education governance represents the "grass roots of American democracy." It is that "down-home" model of the democratic process

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which is uniquely American and is envied by the rest of the world. Local school policy making in the United States is not only democratic but is the best and perhaps a necessary model for the American people, demonstrating that voters do count, that the ballot box can make a difference, and that people do have power and can control public policy.

Statement of the Problem

Using data collected in ninety-five Ohio school districts by Hunt (1980), this study reanalyzed those data, examined the reasons for Hunt's inability to predict school board member incumbent defeat, and developed a model that would have predicted those Ohio school board elections.

Theoretical Perspectives

For years the democratic process has operated to produce episodic and sometimes personally catastrophic change in local school districts. Indicators of public dissatisfaction are often unseen, and unnoticed by local school administrators until a policy crises stimulates revolutionary change rather than permitting evolutionary adaption. Often in local public education policy the first indicator of this revolutionary change process is incumbent school board defeat as described in the Dissatisfaction Theory. Incumbent defeat is an

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intergral element in local education political policy change. Predicting that event early enough may permit effective policy change, and avoid the often disruptive effects of incumbent defeat and superintendent turnover.

One or another of three political perspectives is commonly used to answer the question: is the governance of public education democratic? The Continuous Particpipation Theory (Zeigler and Jennings, 1974) holds that democracy is a matter of public participation in the policy process. Thus, the more people who participate and the more frequently they participate, the more democratic the process. The Decision Output Theory (Wirt and Kirst, 1972) proclaims democracy a matter of the degree of congruence between the demands of the people and the policy output of the government. Then, the more the outputs reflect and meet the demands of the people the more democratic the government. The Dissatisfaction Theory contends that totalitarian regimes may require people to vote without providing any real choices about which to vote. In such a system there is participation without democracy. Also, benevolent despots may give the people what they want without being required to do so. Here one finds congruence between demands and output without democracy. Therefore, the dissatisfaction theory insists that the essence of democracy is freedom to participate and

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change policy when the people are dissatisfied enough with that policy or the freedom not to participate when the people are satisfied enough with the policy to leave it alone. The result is that when the people are unhappy enough about government due to the lack of correspondence between demands and output they will participate, change the government and effect new policy.

Research leading to the Dissatisfaction Theory includes twenty-two years of investigation: Lutz (1962), Walden (1966), Kirkendall (1966), LeDoux (1971), Moen (1971), Garberina (1975), Lutz and Iannaccone (1978) and Hunt (1980). Of particular concern in this line of research has been the identification of indicators of public dissatisfaction leading to incumbent defeat, superintendent turnover and policy change. Based on the work preceeding him, Hunt (1980) attempted to develop a statistical model of socio-economic-political indicators that would predict incumbent defeat. He failed in that attempt. Indicators from the same set of predictors again accounted for incumbent defeat but were unable to predict it in future elections.

The Dissatisfaction Theory postulates that as dissatisfaction increases in a school district more challengers run against incumbents and more incumbents chose to retire rather than risk defeat at the polls. This process is the emperical political heart of the

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dissatisfaction theory. Community dissatisfaction is the critical element in political policy change according to the Dissatisfaction Theory. As public dissatisfaction with policy output occurs and as the incumbent board refuses to accomodate the demands generated by that dissatisfaction, challengers for school board seats increase. As dissatisfaction continues it becomes less likely that incumbents will win. This encourages potential candidates to challenge incumbents. Thus, the number of challengers in any election is a reasonable operational indicator of public dissatisfaction. Variables such as ADA are but presumed indicators of a tendency toward community dissatisfaction that parallel value changes which lead to conflict with the incumbent board. That results in more challengers running against incumbents and finally to incumbent defeat, superintendent turnover and policy change.

Methods

In spite of Hunt's several post-hoc attempts at modeling, based upon the 1973 and 1975 data, he was unable to develop a model that would predict the 1977 elections in Ohio better than chance would have permitted (Lutz and Hunt 1982). In order to explain that failure, this study reanalyzed the Hunt data. The 1973, 1975 and 1977 data sets were re-verified and then tested to determine if they represented samples drawn from the same population. The result is displayed in Table 1.1.

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TABLE 1.1

F TEST FOR R1-73, R1-75, R1-77*
MODELS FROM THE HUNT STUDY

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	2	.5159	.2579	4.261	0.0150
Within Groups	282	17.0700	.0605		
Total	284	17.5859			

Group	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Min.	Max.	95 Pct. Conf. Int. for Mean
R1-73	95	.6351	.2283	.0234	0.0	1.0000	.5886 to .6816
R1-75	95	.5562	.2624	.0269	0.0	1.0000	.5027 to .6097
R1-77	95	.5366	.2460	.0252	0.0	1.0000	.4865 to .5868
Total	285	.5760	.2488	.147	0.0	1.0000	.5470 to .6050

*R1-73, R1-75, and R1-77 represent the dependent variable (incumbent win) in each respective year (i.e. 73, 75, or 77)

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The F ratio in Table 1.1 is significant beyond the 0.05 level indicating that the socio-economic-political factors in the Hunt data were significantly different from one another across the election years. The relationship among R1-73, R1-75, and R1-77 was analyzed using the Tukey T method. Table 1.2 indicates that there is no significant difference between R1-73 and R1-75 or between R1-75 and R1-77 but there is a difference between 1973 and 1977.

TABLE 1.2

TUKEY T TEST FOR R1-73, R1-75, AND R1-77

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Group Pair	n	Within Groups	Difference	D.F.	T Ratio	Sig. Level
R1-73 & R1-75	95	.0605	.0789	3/92	3.1309	
R1-73 & R1-77	95	.0605	.0985	3/92	3.9087*	.05
R1-75 & R1-77	95	.0605	.0196	3/92	0.7777	

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It is possible that the effect of time distorted the prediction model developed by Hunt (1980). He attempted to discover variables which were consistent in accounting for incumbent defeat across time. The tendency of some variables in a multi-regression model to account for variance in a single criterion event and fail to account for that variance in a subsequent criterion event, is called "skrinkage" (Gay, 1976:152). This concept, shrinkage, describes the possibility that one or more of the many variables contributing to a significant R square in a predictor model might occur simply by chance. Therefore it will not contribute in subsequent criterion events and the R square will shrink or fail to be significant. Therefore, variables are needed that represent the dissatisfaction trend and are consistent and stable in the population across time.

In an effort to obtain stable variables, the difference of all possible pairs of years within one variable category (i.e. ADA) were calculated in ratio form. These pairs were put in ratio form, (V2-V1)/V1: WHERE V2 = some succeeding year, V1 = the earlier fixed year.

When 1966 was the fixed year, we calculated average daily attendance (1967-1966)/1966, (1968-1966)/1966,...etc., until all possible pairs of years between 1966 and 1971 inclusive had been calculated. We repeated this process for 1967: (1968-1967)/1967, (1969-1967)/1967, ... (1971-1967)/1967. This process was continued

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until V1 was equal to 1971. We repeated this same process for property tax, assessed valuation and assessed valuation/average daily attendance.

These adjusted ratio variables were used with the criterion variable incumbent wins to calculate Pearson rs and a zero order matrix was produced. The same type ratio variables were computed for the election criterion years 1975 and 1977, always using the year two years prior to the election year as the "fixed year." That is the year when the prediction model for the next election had to be developed, (i.e. Ohio elected school board members every two years). These matrixes were inspected to discover variables that were "reasonably related" to the criterion variable across the criterion years. Thus if (1970ADA-1966ADA)/1966ADA was related to the incumbent win (IW) in 1973, we accepted that as a consistent variable only if (1972ADA-1968ADA)/1968ADA was related to 1975 IW, and (1974ADA-1970ADA)/1970ADA was related to 1977 IW. Visual inspection suggested that such consistency did not occur if we required a statistical significance at .05 or above to occur across all years. Therefore we use the criterion "reasonably related" instead of "consistently and significantly related." Tables 2.1 to 2.3 are the ratio correlation matrixes with predictors of 1973, 1975 and 1977 elections.

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TABLE 2.1

CORRELATION MATRIX
R1-73 WITH PREDICTOR RATIO VARIABLES

Criterion Variables	Predictor Variables				
	PROB1	PTAXC2	PTAXE3	PTAXG2	PAVAF2
R1-73	0.6806 p=0.000	-0.1415 p=0.086	-0.1840 p=0.037	-0.1550 p=0.067	-0.1751 p=0.045
	PASVD6	PADMC1	PADMC2	PADMC3	PADMD1
R1-73	0.1367 p=0.093	0.1631 p=0.057	0.1347 p=0.097	0.1629 p=0.057	0.1417 p=0.085
	PADMD3	PADMG1	PADMG3	PADMF1	PADMF3
R1-73	0.1338 p=0.098	0.1530 p=0.069	0.1678 p=0.052	0.1709 p=0.049	0.2170 p=0.017

n = 95 for all correlations shown

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TABLE 2.2

CORRELATION MATRIX
R1-75 WITH PREDICTOR RATIO VARIALBES

Criterian Variables	Predictor Variables				
	PROB2	POL2	TC173	PTAXB4	PTAXD4
R1-75	0.6323 p=0.000	-0.1031 p=0.160	-0.2359 p=0.011	0.1079 p=0.149	0.1134 p=0.137
	PTAXF4	PAVAD5	PASVC7	PADMB1	PADMB2
R1-75	0.1039 p=0.158	-0.0816 p=0.216	-0.0399 p=0.351	0.2012 p=0.025	0.2138 p=0.019
	PADMB3	PADMC1	PADMC3	PADME1	PADME3
R1-75	0.1884 p=0.034	0.1969 p=0.028	0.1803 p=0.040	0.1801 p=0.040	0.1476 p=0.077
	PADMF1	PADMF3			
R1-75	0.2269 p=0.014	0.2573 p=0.006			

n = 95 for all correlations shown

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TABLE 2.3

CORRELATION MATRIX
R1-77 WITH PREDICTOR RATIO VARIABLES

Criterion Variables	Predictor Variables				
	PROB3	POL1	TC175	PTAXA6	PTAXC5
R1-77	0.7223 p=0.000	0.1465 p=0.078	0.1681 p=0.052	0.1158 p=0.130	0.1553 p=0.066
	PTAXC6	PAVAB8	PASVB8	PADMA1	PADMA2
R1-77	0.1929 p=0.031	0.1436 p=0.083	0.1155 p=0.132	-0.1243 p=0.115	-0.1413 p=0.086
	PADMA3	PADMB1	PADMB3	PADMD1	PADMD3
R1-77	-0.1198 p=0.124	-0.1095 p=0.145	-0.1032 p=0.160	-0.1403 p=0.088	-0.1438 p=0.082
	PADME1	PADME3			
	-0.1635 p=0.057	-0.1757 p=0.044			

n = 95 for all correlations shown

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Although Hunt had included political variables such as the Challenger Index (see Thorslead, 1974) he had not included any variable describing the number of challengers in the criterion year election. As indicated earlier in the theoretical prospective section, this is the "heart" of the Dissatisfaction Theory. The previous election, with many challengers due to dissatisfaction of the electorate, may have produced incumbent defeat and policy change, resulting in a newly established voter satisfaction. On the other hand, the previous election may not yet have seen enough dissatisfaction and few or no challengers. Given that all incumbents won in the last election and no policy change occured, there now may be great dissatisfaction and several challengers. Thus, for our re-analysis study, we added a "dissatisfaction factor" which was calculated as follows:

$$1 - \frac{\text{Number of seats available in the criterion year}}{\text{Incumbents running + challengers in the criterion year}}$$

This new predictor variable was included in the new analysis. Prob1 to Prob3 are the dissatisfaction factors for 1973, 1974 and 1977 elections, respectively. In the table 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 (provided above) this dissatisfaction factor appears along with the ratio factors from the Hunt data in order to illustrate the consistent strength of this new dissatisfaction factor. Using Hunt's data, but only the ratio factors selected as "most consistent" and adding our dissatisfaction factor, 1973, 1975 and 1977 models were produced using incumbent wins as the criterion variable.

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Re-Analysis of the Hunt Data

Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 present the results of the step-wise regression analysis of the Hunt data, using the "reasonably consistant" ratio variables from the Hunt data and the inclusion of new dissatisfaction factor for each criterion year.

TABLE 3.1

RE-ANALYSIS REGRESSION EQUATION FOR 1973 DATA
R1-73 WITH PREDICTORS

			DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE
MULTIPLE R	0.70747	REGRESSION	3	2.45405	0.81802
ADJUSTED R SQUARE	0.48405	RESIDUAL	91	2.44900	0.02691
STANDARD ERROR	0.16405	F = 30.39592		SIG. ≤ .001	
R SQUARE	0.50052				

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLE	B	SE B	BETA	T	SIG T
PROB1	0.00802	0.8931D-03	0.66719	8.982	0.0000
PAVAF2	-0.00367	0.00176	-0.15434	-2.078	0.0405
PTAXG2	-0.00151	0.8994D-03	-0.12503	-1.682	0.0959
(CONSTANT)	0.27850	0.05538		5.029	0.0000

VARIABLES NOT IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLE	BETA IN	PARTIAL	MIN TOLER	T	SIG T
PTASC2	0.00266	0.00316	0.70446	0.030	0.9761
PTAXE3	-0.06738	-0.09145	0.92021	-0.871	0.3859
PASVD6	0.08579	0.11794	0.94394	1.127	0.2629
PADMC1	0.03711	0.05127	0.95311	0.487	0.6275
PADMC2	0.01759	0.02432	0.95437	0.231	0.8180
PADMC3	0.01239	0.01704	0.94471	0.162	0.8719
PADMD1	0.02721	0.03770	0.95850	0.358	0.7213
PADMD3	-0.00352	-0.00485	0.94883	-0.046	0.9634
PADMG1	0.05874	0.08100	0.94973	0.771	0.4427
PADMG3	0.00537	0.00724	0.90796	0.069	0.9454
PADMF1	0.07024	0.09629	0.93879	0.918	0.3612
PADMF3	0.04560	0.06030	0.87344	0.573	0.5680

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TABLE 3.2

RE-ANALYSIS REGRESSION EQUATION FOR 1975 DATA
R1-75 WITH PREDICTORS

			DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE
MULTIPLE R	0.65346	REGRESSION	2	2.76534	1.38267
ADJUSTED R SQUARE	0.41455	RESIDUAL	92	3.71077	0.04033
STANDARD ERROR	0.20083	F = 34.28012		SIG. $\leq$ .001	
R SQUARE	0.42701				

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLES	B	SE B	BETA	T	SIG T
PROB2	0.00926	0.00122	0.60746	7.611	0.0000
PADMF3	0.01092	0.00522	0.16681	2.090	0.0394
(CONSTANT)	0.06904	0.06238		1.107	0.2713

VARIABLES NOT IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLE	BETA IN	PARTIAL	MIN TOLER	T	SIG T
POL2	-0.04656	-0.06069	0.95434	-0.580	0.5633
TC173	-0.11289	-0.14365	0.92775	-1.385	0.1695
PTAXB4	0.05518	0.07247	0.96738	0.693	0.4900
PTAXD4	0.10729	0.14172	0.97766	1.366	0.1754
PYAXE4	0.04874	0.06396	0.96866	0.611	0.5424
PAVAD5	-0.05616	-0.07412	0.97619	-0.709	0.4801
PASVC7	0.03109	0.04078	0.96373	0.389	0.6980
PADMB1	0.03420	0.03663	0.65439	0.350	0.7274
PADMB2	0.05526	0.06058	0.68603	0.579	0.5641
PADMB3	0.02895	0.03248	0.71780	0.310	0.7573
PADMC1	0.02672	0.02805	0.62837	0.268	0.7895
PADMC3	0.01928	0.02130	0.69467	0.203	0.8394
PADME1	-0.01547	-0.01542	0.56678	-0.147	0.8833
PADME3	-0.03030	-0.03243	0.65043	-0.310	0.7576
PADMF1	0.02649	0.02073	0.34967	0.198	0.8436

TABLE 3.3

RE-ANALYSIS REGRESSION EQUATION FOR 1977 DATA
R1-77 WITH PREDICTORS

			DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE
MULTIPLE R	0.75583	REGRESSION	3	3.25093	1.08364
ADJUSTED R SQUARE	0.55715	RESIDUAL	91	2.43967	0.02681
STANDARD ERROR	0.16374	F=	40.42009	SIG. ≥	.001
R SQUARE	0.57128				

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLE	B	SE B	BETA	T	SIG T
PROB3	0.00966	0.9321D-03	0.71365	10.363	0.0000
PAVAB8	0.00755	0.00294	0.17778	2.572	0.0117
PTAXC6	0.00277	0.00122	0.15701	2.265	0.0259
(CONSTANT)	0.03241	0.04963		0.653	0.5154

VARIABLES NOT IN THE EQUATION

VARIABLE	BETA IN	PARTIAL	MIN TOLER	T	SIG T
POL1	-0.01196	-0.01735	0.90275	-0.165	0.8696
TC175	0.08965	0.13436	0.95724	1.286	0.2016
PTAXA6	-0.11563	-0.10921	0.38242	-1.042	0.3001
PTAXC5	-0.01191	-0.01363	0.56212	-0.129	0.8974
PASVB8	-0.16393	-0.10941	0.19097	-1.044	0.2992
PADMA1	-0.08639	-0.13003	0.95230	-1.244	0.2167
PADMA2	-0.08647	-0.13037	0.95702	-1.247	0.2155
PADMA3	-0.09074	-0.13751	0.96511	-1.317	0.1912
PADMB1	-0.07920	-0.11907	0.94971	-1.138	0.2583
PADMB3	-0.08345	-0.12630	0.96341	-1.208	0.2303
PADMD1	-0.09189	-0.13800	0.94959	-1.322	0.1896
PADMD3	-0.10124	-0.15343	0.96640	-1.473	0.1442
PADME1	-0.09757	-0.14509	0.93131	-1.391	0.1676
PADME3	-0.10878	-0.16332	0.95178	-1.571	0.1198

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The single consistent and major contributor to the variance in each criterion year was the dissatisfaction factor. As noted earlier in the Table 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 the r square between the dissatisfaction factor and incumbent win was always approximately .50 and always significant beyond the .001 level. We were therfore not surprised to discover that the "dissatisfaction factor" continued to account for the major variance in Table 3.1 through 3.3. This further demonstrates why Hunt failed. Without the dissatisfaction factor the model could not have predicted. The population was changing and not consistent. Thus shrinkage occured. Beta weights of variables, exclusive of the "dissatisfaction factor," based upon one model were ineffective in predicting the elections two years hence.

Table 4.1 displays the Beta weights for the 1975 predictive model including the 1975 "dissatisfaction factor" (CPROB2).

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TABLE 4.1
1975 MODEL BETA WEIGHT VALUE IN THE 1975 MODEL

CPROB2 = 0.60746	CPADNF3 = 0.16681	CPOL2 = -0.04656
CTC173 = -0.11289	CPTAXB4 = C.05518	CPTAXD4 = 0.10729
CPTAXE4 = 0.04874	CPAVAD5 = -0.5616	CPASVC7 = 0.03109
CPADMB1 = 0.03420	CPADMB2 = 0.05526	CPADMB3 = 0.02895
CPADMC1 = 0.02672	CPADMC3 = 0.01928	CPADME1 = -0.01547
CPADME3 = -0.03030	CPADMF1 = 0.02649	

Table 4.2 displays the Beta weights in the 1975 model multiplied by the new dissatisfaction factor. The ability of that model to predict the 1977 elections is illustrated by the F ratio, Sig. $\geq$ .001 displayed in Table 4.3.

TABLE 4.2

1975 BETA WEIGHT MULTIPLIED
BY THE PREDICTORS FOR 1977

R1-7577 = CPROB2 * PROB3 + CPADMF3 * PADME3 + CPADME2 * PADMA2 +
CPADMC1 * PADMB1 + CPADMC3 * PADMB3 + CPADME1 * PADMD1 +
CPADME3 * PADMD3 + CPADME1 * PADMA1 + CPADMB3 * PADMA3 +
CPTAXE4 * PTAXC6 + CPTAXC4 * PTAXC5 + CPTAXB4 * PTAXA6 +
CPASVC7 * PASVB8 + CTC173 * TC175 + CPADMF1 * PADME1 +
CPOL2 * POL1 + CPAVAD5 * PAVAB8

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TABLE 4.3

TEST OF 1975 MODEL TO PREDICT 1977 ELECTIONS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE = INCUMBENT WING 1977
PREDICTOR VARIABLE = R1-75 77

			DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE
MULTIPLE R	0.60868	REGRESSION	1	2.10834	2.10834
ADJUSTED R SQUARE	0.36372	RESIDUAL	93	3.58237	0.03852
STANDARD ERROR	0.19627	F = 54.73350		SIG.	$\geq$ .001
R SQUARE	0.37049				

As demonstrated in Table 4.3 we were successful in our re-analysis in developing a model that would have predicted the 1977 Ohio elections. The multiple R was significant beyond the .001 level.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing we feel that the Dissatisfaction Theory of American Democracy has been supported. Hunt (1980) demonstrated that the same set standard, social-economic-political factors could again be used to account for incumbent defeat. These variables have stood the test of time and geographic location. Yet, Lutz and Hunt (1982) reported their disappointment, in not being able to develop a model that could predict future elections.

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Our re-analysis of the Hunt data resulted in the location of some "reasonably stable and consistent ratio variables." Of particular importance was the discovery of a single "dissatisfaction factor" that was capable of predicting the results of school board elections in ninety-five Ohio districts in 1977. This "dissatisfaction factor" may prove to be a significant contribution to the theory and the prediction of school board members defeat, this making education policy change more stable.

We are presently engaged in the collection of a new set of data from Texas Independent School Districts to see if this modeling process will predict the outcome of school board elections in that state.

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